

U.S. WEIGHS MOVES IN DANILOFF CRISIS

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 14 — Senior Reagan Administration officials, ruling out a direct exchange of an American journalist confined to Moscow for a Russian physicist restricted to New York, said today that they were discussing other formulas with Soviet officials to end the latest crisis in relations.

Amid signs of strain within the Administration over how to deal with the dual cases of Nicholas S. Daniloff, Moscow correspondent for U.S. News & World Report, and Gennadi F. Zakharov, a Russian employee of a United Nations agency, there were fresh calls by a key Republican Senator today to suspend all substantive talks with Moscow until Mr. Daniloff was allowed to return to the United States.

One proposal, said to be under discussion, would be for the Soviet Union to deport Mr. Daniloff without a trial and exchange some prominent dissidents, such as the physicist Andrei D. Sakharov, who is in internal exile in Gorky, for Mr. Zakharov.

John C. Whitehead, Deputy Secretary of State, said on television this morning that so far there had been "no breakthroughs" in the talks. "We continue to work at it, there are negotiations going on, we are continuing to insist that Daniloff be set free; he is not yet free."

Proposal to Limit Discussion

Senator Richard G. Lugar of Indiana, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, said that if Mr. Daniloff is not returned to the United States by next Friday, when Foreign Minister Eduard A. Shevardnadze is to begin a two-day meeting in Washington with Secretary of State George P. Shultz, the agenda should be limited only to the release of Mr. Daniloff.

And both Mr. Lugar and Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Democrat of New York, said there should be no summit meeting between President Reagan and Mikhail S. Gorbachev, the Soviet leader, until Mr. Daniloff was freed unconditionally.

On Friday, Mr. Zakharov, who was arrested on Aug. 23 and subsequently indicted on three counts of espionage, was freed from a Manhattan jail and turned over to the custody of the Soviet Embassy on the condition he not leave a 25-mile radius of the United Nations and that he report to court when called.

In return, Mr. Daniloff, who was arrested on Aug. 30 and charged with espionage in Moscow in what appeared to be retaliation for the Zakharov arrest,

was released on similar terms to the United States Embassy.

A White House official said today that Mr. Reagan had decided to go along with the arrangement, proposed by the Soviet side, to ease the psychological pressure on Mr. Daniloff.

But the official said that several top aides, including Vice Adm. John M. Poindexter, the national security adviser, had raised strong objections to the arrangement because it seemed to run counter to Mr. Reagan's pledge that there could be "no trade" and no equivalence in the two cases. The United States had insisted that Mr. Daniloff be given safe passage to the United States and that only then would Mr. Zakharov be placed in the custody of his embassy.

Mr. Shultz defended the American agreement to the arrangement as necessary for Mr. Daniloff's well-being. American officials said they were concerned about reports from visitors to Mr. Daniloff in Lefortovo Prison that he was suffering in the cramped quarters and constant pressure of daily interrogations.

As an indication of the tensions caused by Daniloff case, several current or former Administration officials refused to accompany more than 200 other Americans to Riga, Latvia, for a "town meeting" with Soviet counterparts that begins on Monday.

Mr. Whitehead, appearing today on the CBS News program "Face the Nation," reiterated what Mr. Shultz said on Friday: that despite the Daniloff affair, it made no sense to halt other negotiations.

Mr. Whitehead, when presented with Mr. Lugar's insistence that Mr. Shultz speak only about the Daniloff case with Mr. Shevardnadze, countered by saying that although it will be "high on the agenda," it should not exclude other subjects.

"We can only discuss this so far," he said. "If they refuse to set him free, the world must go on. This is an important issue but, of course, it's not the only issue. We can only gain by discussion. If we terminate all discussions with the Soviet Union then we cannot make progress on this case or on anything else."

Soviet Told of 'No Trade' Stance

Several officials said the Administration, in its discussions with the Soviet side, has ruled out a direct trade of Mr. Daniloff for Mr. Zakharov because of its contention that Mr. Zakharov was a genuine spy and that Mr. Daniloff was an innocent journalist.

In publicizing its contention that Mr. Daniloff was a spy, the Soviet Union has linked him to two former U.S. Embassy officers, Paul M. Stombaugh, who was expelled last year, and Murat Natirboff, who it claims was the Central Intelligence Agency "station chief" in Moscow until recently.

The State Department, as is its custom, refused to comment on the charges on the grounds that it never confirms or denies that a particular embassy officer was working for the C.I.A.

Mr. Stombaugh was posted to Moscow as a political officer specializing in the Soviet Baltic republics.

According to the State Department's Biographic Register for 1974, the last

year that book was published in an unclassified format, Mr. Natirboff was born on Feb. 4, 1921, and was assigned to Khartoum, the Sudan, in May 1972, as a political officer.

Because of its desire not to let the Daniloff case dominate Soviet-American relations, the Administration is examining other approaches, officials said, under which Mr. Zakharov might be traded for others in the Soviet Union besides Mr. Daniloff.

That was what happened in 1978-79, in the closest parallel to that case. In May 1978, two Soviet employees of the United Nations, who like Mr. Zakharov lacked diplomatic immunity, were arrested by the F.B.I. and charged with espionage. Bail was set so high that they remained in jail, over Soviet protests. A few weeks later, an American businessman was arrested in Moscow on charges of smuggling.

The American said he was innocent and had been seized only to provide leverage for the release of the two Russians in New York. Eventually, the United States agreed that all three be put in the custody of their embassies. In September, the American, F. Jay Crawford, was found guilty and permitted to leave the Soviet Union. The two Soviet U.N. employees were found guilty in October and, while appealing their conviction, were traded for five imprisoned Soviet dissidents in April 1979.

Mr. Whitehead said he would not discuss the details of the negotiations, except to say that "our position is that there will be no swap, no trade of releasing Daniloff and releasing Zakharov."

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